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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Bush Immigration Policy  
War on Terror Rehabilitation of Kadhafi - Venezuela Weapons  
Ban  
PARIS - Wednesday, May 17, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Bush Immigration Policy  
War on Terror  
Rehabilitation of Kadhafi - Venezuela Weapons Ban

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Le Figaro leads with several balanced articles and its editorial on President Bush and his "Attempts to Close the Mexican Border" while Liberation and Les Echos both title their reports: "Bush Between the Carrot and the Stick." Le Figaro devotes three major articles announced on the front page: "The President's Counter Offensive," "A Global Reform" and "Mexico Disappointed." The editorial is entitled "Bush as Border Guard." (See Part C)

Most front pages continue to focus on domestic issues: the no-confidence vote at the National Assembly, which failed yesterday for lack of support, leaves PM Villepin weak. Le Figaro headlines: "The UMP Does the Minimum for Villepin," while Liberation titles "The Right Censures Itself."

The economic press leads with the hostile takeover of Arcelor by Mittal to be played out today on the stock exchange. Le Figaro Economie devotes a major report to Airbus and its A350 "which will need to be revised, its launch postponed, and cost double the initial price."

La Tribune devotes wide coverage to the Cannes Film Festival, which opens today, to the world premiere of the Da Vinci Code and to the "hegemony of mega film budgets which are being threatened by smaller productions and by pirated copies." The editorial entitled "Hollywood in Cannes" comments: "The gap resides between the myth the Festival organizers want to promote, and the place of honor granted to a commercial super production which would never have been chosen to run among the official contenders. There are those who will wonder what would become of the Cannes Festival if it stopped getting high on Hollywood super productions. The irony lies in that, just when Cannes is beginning to accept films for what they are, pure entertainment, American movie studios are beginning to have doubts about the effectiveness of their films as models."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Bush Immigration Policy

"Pierre Rousselin in right-of-center Le Figaro (05/17):  
"The fact that the U.S., a nation of immigrants, has reverted to using its National Guard in order to stop its illegal immigration shows that we, the Europeans, are not the only ones to still grapple with the problem. President Bush knows that 6,000 soldiers will not stop illegal immigration: if he chose to make the announcement it was to make an impact and prove that the U.S. wants to change a system that works no better than ours. The issue of assimilating such a large number of immigrants has become a political time bomb, here as there. But in the U.S., the vast majority of immigrants are Hispanics who have espoused the nation's values: they are not a cultural problem, except maybe when it comes to the issue of language. The 'melting pot' is threatened. The law that will ultimately be adopted will have to be a synthesis of two diametrically opposed texts. President Bush is very attached to immigration and its values. And while he favors the Senate's more liberal approach, he is facing opposition from his own party. The impact of the National Guard announcement is meant to reassure his own party. Immigration could well become a major political platform in the November elections."

"Bush Between the Carrot and the Stick"

Laurent Mauriac in left-of-center Liberation (05/17): "As he proposes to send 6,000 National Guards to the Mexican border, President Bush is also proposing to grant legal status to illegal immigrants on U.S. soil. This is a highly sensitive issue for the President: his position on immigration is perceived as a major reason for his recent drop in popularity. His televised speech was the first one on a national issue. It was also an opportunity to divert attention from the latest revelations about the NSA taps. The first reactions show that the U.S. President was not able to alter the divisions in his own party. But according to a CNN poll, the American people reacted positively to the speech: 67% says they have a good opinion of his immigration policy."

"Bush Between the Carrot and the Stick"

David Barroux in right-of-center Les Echos (05/17): "With the mid-term elections looking extremely close, President Bush is trying to wield both the carrot and the stick. But once again he has failed. He is too soft for some, too harsh for others. The President did not find the words to bring together his Republican majority or to charm the Democrats. Yet in the President's first speech on a domestic issue he did try to give tokens to both camps."

"Mexico Disappointed by a 'Sovereign Decision'"

Frederic Faux in right-of-center Le Figaro (05/17): "For Vincente Fox, the American immigration plan is a major failure, two months from a presidential election. Worried over a measure that in his eyes will not resolve the problem of illegal immigration, Fox had to bow to a 'sovereign decision.'"

#### War on Terrorism

"'War' Against Terror Supersedes Civil Liberties"

Corinne Lesnes in left-of-center Le Monde (05/17): "Washington's pretext of national security to legitimize unconstitutional practices compares to other periods in history, like the two world wars and the Cold War. These practices are in keeping with the Enemy Alien Act of 1798, which has never been repealed. But in 2003 the Supreme Court gave a ruling on Guantanamo detainees that went against the administration, because, as Sandra Day O'Connor said, 'a state of war is not a blank check.' David Cole, a staunch critic of the Bush administration regrets the use of 'Commander in Chief as a magic word.' even if with terrorism, the challenge is prevention, which led to John Ashcroft's 'preemptive paradigm.' But, says Cole, 'the government has sacrificed certain constitutional principles. The administration is offering a strange deal: we sacrifice the freedom of some other individual in the name of security for all.' The Heritage Foundation sees nothing wrong in this attitude: says the Foundation's James Carafano: 'Let's give 5000 terrorists to the Europeans, and see what they do.'"

#### Rehabilitation of Kadhafi - Venezuela Weapons Ban

"Chavez Visits Kadhafi"

Lamia Oualalou in right-of-center Le Figaro (05/17): "The U.S. could not have chosen a better time to annoy Chavez and upset his relations with some of his most fiendish friends. As he was about to land in Tripoli, Washington upset the deck of cards and distributed good and bad marks. As the State Department announced normalization with Libya, it also announced a ban on weapons sales to Venezuela accused of not cooperating on the war against terror. The decision is symbolic, since Chavez's prior decision to shift suppliers. It was also predictable, considering Washington's attitude towards Spain and Brazil. But the decision also marks a new escalation and the increasing isolation of Chavez on the international scene." STAPLETON